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## STONE MONUMENTS IN SOUTHERN DAKOTA.

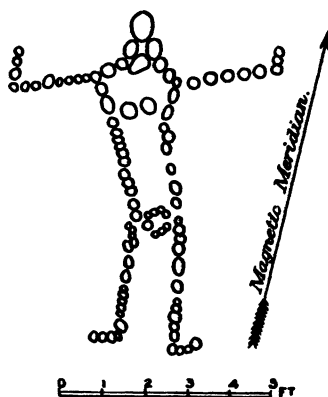
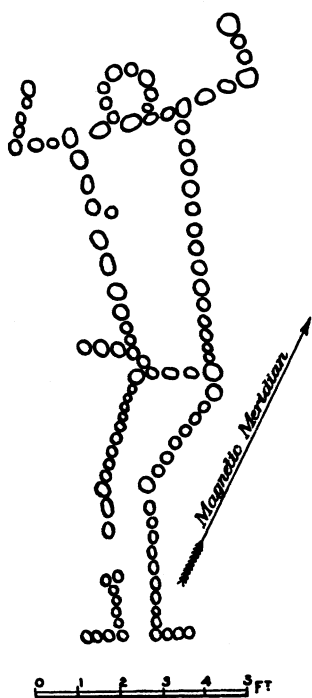
BY T. H. LEWIS.

There is a class of antiquities in the Northwest which have not as yet received the attention to which their importance entitles them. They consist of outline figures made by placing bowlders upon the ground in the shape of circles and squares, but occasionally they constitute other forms. Scarcely any of the bowlders used exceed a foot in diameter.

These outline figures are found over a large territory, extending from Southern Iowa and Nebraska to Manitoba, on the north, and from the Mississippi river through Dakota into Montana.

*The Man and Woman.*—Punished Woman's Hill, on which are

located two of the best-known works of this class, is situated about three miles south of Punished Woman's Lakes, in the northeastern corner of Coding-



ton County, Dakota. The hill is a high "hog-back," with spurs, rather than a rounded, symmetrical elevation, and the

country in its vicinity is somewhat rolling and broken, lying as

it does on the eastern part of the Plateau du Coteau des Prairies, which divides the waters of the Minnesota river from those of the Big Sioux.

I visited this section in September, 1883, and found the outlines so interesting that I made a complete survey of what remained in good condition. They represented a man and a woman.

The male figure is near the end of a spur which runs northward from a knoll several feet higher. The length from the top of the head to the heels is  $13\frac{1}{2}$  feet. It is the representation of a man lying upon his back, with uplifted arms. The number of bowlders used in making this figure is one hundred and four.

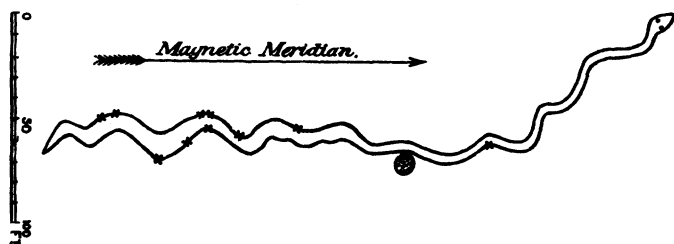
The female figure, or woman, is on the same spur, 42 feet distant from the man, to the southeast. She is also represented as lying upon her back, with outstretched arms. Her length from the top of the head to the heels is 8 feet, and the number of bowlders used in the figure is ninety-two. Her outline is much ruder than that of the man.

Commencing at the feet of the man and running in a southerly direction past the woman is a trail, 102 feet long, formed by placing bowlders at irregular intervals. It ends at the foot of a slope, 31 feet from a cairn, which is some four feet in height. On this knoll with the cairn there are two small shallow excavations—one four feet in diameter and the other four by six feet. Nearly south of this knoll, at the end of a small spur, there is another small cairn. Seventy feet to the west of the first cairn begins another trail of bowlders running nearly west along a hog-back for 285 feet, to within 15 feet of a third cairn. This is on a knoll of about the same height as that of the first knoll, the hog-back being somewhat lower. There are two cairns on this. One of them, composed of large, heavy bowlders, is nearly six feet high; the other is nearly as massive, but is only about five feet high. Near the smaller cairn there is an excavation which has the appearance of a sunken grave. On the south side of the trail, along the hog-back, there is another figure, which apparently represented a person, but vandals have defaced it by carrying away the stones.

The Dakotas have a tradition in regard to Punished Woman's Hill, which runs as follows: A chief of that nation had a very beautiful daughter, whom he forced to marry against her will. She soon, however, ran away with the brave of her own choice, and they camped on a hill overlooking the lake. The lawful husband

followed their trail, and when he discovered them he killed the lover and savagely wounded the woman, leaving her to die. On returning to the village he boasted of what he had done. The chief loved his daughter, and so, taking the people of his village, he went to see if what had been said was true. Finding that it was, he killed the husband. The Indians marked the places where the lover and wife were found, and also the spot where the husband was killed. The trails, with the bowlders strewn along at intervals, are said to mark the ground over which the woman crawled towards the lake in search of water. The cairns are reported to be monuments to mark the hill upon which the tragedy occurred.

The tradition as given above was related to me by a Dakota chief, but the story was probably invented by the Indians to account for these monuments, for the hill is not even in sight of the lake, and the trail runs from or to the man's feet, leaving the woman to one side.



*The Snake.*—About  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the southwest of the village of Blunt, Hughes county, and 11 miles in a straight line from the Missouri river, is a high, irregular table-land, called "Medicine Butte," the top of which is some 400 feet above Medicine creek, distant about 2 miles to the east. At different points on this table grand views of the country may be had. From the point where the figure next to be described is situated the view is especially fine, a grand panorama being spread out to the north and northwest. The sides of the butte are very steep in some places, but in others there are long spurs extending out from its sides.

The figure in question is built upon the north end of this Paha Wakan (Medicine Knoll) of the Dakotas, and represents a snake. Its head is 10 feet in length and nearly 7 feet wide at the broadest point. Two oblong stones represent the eyes. The body varies in width from 3 to 10 feet. The stones composing the outline of

the tail are much smaller than those used for the body, many of them being no larger than an egg. There are said to have been several large bowlders extending out from the end of the tail, representing rattles, but on September 7, 1884, when this survey was made, there was no indication that there ever had been any bowlders at that point. The total length of the snake, following the curves, is 360 feet, and the total number of stones and bowlders used in the outline and including the two for the eyes is 825, of which at least ten occupied their present positions previous to the construction of the snake, as shown on the diagram.

About midway and to its right there is a small stone heap or cairn, which some barbarian has partially demolished, that must have been from three to four feet in height.

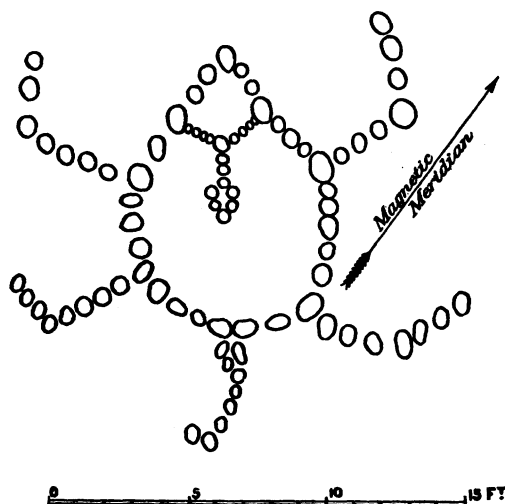
I was told by the Indians that the snake was built in commemoration of a great war speech made by a Dakota chief at a time when that tribe had just returned from a grand hunt in which they had been very successful. But from the apparent age of these monuments this story is extremely doubtful.

The snake is not the only bowlder-outline figure on top of this butte, for there are many circles, a few squares, and some other shapes. There are also several cairns in addition to that already mentioned as lying near the main figure. The Indians claim that the stone circles mark the places where in former times the tepees of their people were located, and that the bowlders held down the edges of the skin tents in place. This explanation, however, is unsatisfactory, for if the bowlders had been used for that purpose they would have been scattered round more or less, and it would not have required so many of them, and besides many of the circles are rather small to be accounted for in that way, some being only eight feet in diameter.

*The "Turtle."*—The bowlder-outline figure locally known as the "Turtle" is located on the north side of "Snake Butte," a hill situated some six miles north of Pierre, in Hughes county. It is near the edge of the bluff and within a mile of the Missouri river. It may have been built to represent a tortoise, but it is just as likely that some sort of beetle was meant.

There is a line of small stones which divides the head from the body. Near the center of this line a similar one runs back to the center of the body and ends in a small circle. From the end of the nose to the tip of the tail it is 15 feet, and the width of the body is

about 8 feet. The distance between the ends of the fore feet is 13 feet, and between the hind feet 17 feet. The legs are from  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to 7 feet in length, and the tail is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet long.



Running in a northerly direction along the edge of the bluff for from 500 to 800 yards there is a row of bowlders, placed at irregular intervals. According to Indian tradition these bowlders are said to mark the places where blood dripped from an Arikara chief as he fled from the Dakotas, who had mortally wounded him.

Strung along the bluff, near its edge, there are many squares, circles, some parallelograms, and other figures, which it is impossible to describe or to determine what they were intended to represent.

On the top of Snake Butte proper there are a few circles and other figures.

When I surveyed the "Turtle," September 15, 1884, the butte and the land immediately surrounding it were almost undisturbed prairie, there being but a few acres under cultivation.

*Conclusion.*—The localities treated of mostly lie to one side of the routes of explorers and travelers prior to the era of railroad building in the farther Northwest, and I can find no account of them, or any other places similarly distinguished, in their books, nor any narrations of traditions connected with them.

Although the Indians have a way of accounting for these outline figures, as they have for everything else that is peculiar or wonderful,

it is evident that they are very ancient. In every instance I have found the bowlders composing them imbedded in the ground to a greater or less depth, and occasionally they are imbedded to such an extent that only small portions of them are visible, and might easily be taken for stones deposited there by nature, as seen so plentifully at various places. I think there can be little room to doubt that the construction of these figures must have antedated the residence in that region of any of the Dakota tribes.

It is prudent to dismiss any ideas of a community of origin between the ancient stone monuments of North America and those of other continents derived merely from resemblances of shape, and yet it may not be out of place to point out that the bowlder-outline figures of our Northwestern regions are not without parallel in the eastern hemisphere—at least so far as the circles, squares, and other forms not imitative of animals are concerned. Those who are interested enough to make research will find proof of the statement in J. W. Waring's "Stone monuments, tumuli, and ornaments of remote ages" (London, 1870), where they will see specimens of similar circular and other arrangements of stone—"ancient cemeteries"—situated in Sweden, North Germany, the Italian Alps, Algeria, and India.

In the absence of the author the preceding paper was read by Mr. H. W. HENSHAW at the meeting of the Anthropological Society, February 5, 1889.

It was discussed by Prof. CYRUS THOMAS and Dr. W. MATTHEWS.

Professor Thomas thought that there was no good reason for supposing that these bowlder figures were not made by Indians of the Siouan stock, and perhaps they were made by Dakotas proper. He thought that the effigy and other mounds of Wisconsin and Minnesota might reasonably be attributed to the same people.

Dr. Matthews said that the formation of the figures was no evidence of great industry or of an advance beyond the savage state on the part of the makers. The effigies were found in a country covered with glacial drift where bowlders were abundant on the surface, particularly on the hill-tops. He could not speak for the particular circles of stones to which Mr. Lewis refers; but he was certain that many stone circles in Dakota were to be attributed to the former use of bowlders in holding down the edges of skin tents.

He had seen bowlders used for this purpose in Dakota twenty-three years ago, while the Indians still followed the nomadic life. The fact that some circles were only eight feet in diameter did not militate against this theory, since the Indians used small lodges as sweat-houses and for sacerdotal purposes. He spoke of a long line of bowlders which he had seen some years ago on a bluff near the Missouri, west and north of Crow Creek. He believed it to be of a similar character to that of the bowlder trails of which Mr. Lewis speaks. It was once a noted landmark in Dakota and was called by the French-Canadian hunters *La Chaine de Roche*, or the Chain of Rocks. He had of late years seen the name corrupted by newspaper correspondents into "Chaney's Ranch" and "Chancy Rush's."

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SACRED NUMBERS AMONG THE IROQUOIS.—Three puffs are taken from a pipe when smoking according to ceremonial custom. Three gates or doors are supposed to guard the way to the land of the dead. Three days are consumed in the journey thither. Three days after death the spirit of man repasses his former home on its way to the spirit world, and this repassage is made known by knockings on some article of furniture or on the side of the house formerly occupied. A plant called *i-tyā'-ti* is used in compounding the new *Kā-nu'-tā'*, which is thought to be a sovereign cure for internal injuries, while the old *Kā-nu'-tā'* was the great war medicine or cure for fresh wounds. The plants of the *i-tyā'-ti* must not be collected unless in threes, and each three must stand in a triangle, and "real tobacco" sprinkled on the plants standing near the said triangular group of plants, else they are of no medicinal virtue whatever. Three days after the first woman was cast down from the sky she gave birth to the future mother of the Good Spirit, Creator of man, and of the Spirit of Evil. The menorrhagic flow ceased in three days. Only three trials are allowable in contests of skill or strength. Formerly, if a person was threatened with bodily harm or other injury, the person so threatened, after bidding the threatener "do not do it" three several times, was justified in any course, even to taking the life of the offender. This, of course, is an outcome of the belief in witchcraft. After offering anything three several times to a person and thrice to a second person one was justified in giving it without reserve to a third person. Three cups of medicine were used by the great wizard who killed a so-called great serpent, the



appearance of which was so terrific that those who looked upon it died vomiting blood.

In Seneca, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, and Cayuga the literal meaning of the word for four is "complete, right, perfect," and so in the legend of the Constitution of the League we find that the tree, which is symbolic of the power and dominion of the confederacy, has *four* roots, extending, respectively, toward the north, the east, the south, and the west, to symbolize and emphasize the important fact that the League was *designed* to include in this brotherhood of divers tribes and peoples the whole known world, or, in Onandagan speech, *oñ-kwe-hoñ-we-sä-kwe'ki*, *i. e.*, the collective whole of the Indian race. Four seasons were recognized and named.

Five days or some multiple of that number of days must elapse between the announcement and the taking place of a dance, a general council, a feast, etc., etc., a grain of corn being the substitute for an invitation card, because corn sprouts in five days after sowing. Five days covered the period during which boys at the age of puberty changed their voices. After five days a woman left the menstrual lodge to re-enter her home. The killer of five deer was considered very subtle and more than commonly endowed with the powers of enchantment, and was equally honored with one who killed six or more. An aged Cayuga gave me the details of a story in fives.

Seven days after parturition a woman was considered to be again well, and was then permitted to get up and go out, and the child to be taken out of doors. In two distinct legends the seventh son in two different families shows himself to be extraordinarily endowed with magical powers—to be, in fact, a wizard.

Ten days or a double-five days after death, not burial, of a person the feast of the dead was given by the family of the deceased person. Every ten years occurred a national feast of the dead. The number ten is supposed to have an especial affinity to the dead. Hence, the price of two lives, those of the murdered and of the murderer, was placed by a law of the Iroquois League at twenty—a double ten—strings of wampum, each string representing, it is said, an apology, or oration counseling and pleading for forgiveness, by as many sachems or lord-chiefs as there are strings.

The examples given above are the most striking of many found.

J. N. B. HEWITT.